

MINUTES OF THE MONTANA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

January 19, 2005

Carroll College

Helena, Montana

Governor Brian Schweitzer called the meeting to order. Dr. Tom Trebon, President of Carroll College welcomed the Board of Education. He explained that the t-shirt he was wearing was part of a "hate language" project initiated by Carroll College students.

Governor Schweitzer addressed the board and stressed the important role of education in Montana. Both K-12 and higher education are connected with economic development. He stated that it was necessary to attract families to Montana. Their primary concerns are: how good are the schools, how safe are the communities and how safe are the schools. He stated that the Governor's office supports Shared Leadership. He encouraged the Board to provide opportunities for training in the kinds of occupations where our young people can find jobs that pay a livable wage so they can stay in Montana.

ROLL CALL

Members present included: Regents Lynn Morrison-Hamilton, Richard Roehm, Mike Foster, Mark Semmens, Lila Taylor, John Mercer, Kala French; Board of Education members Kirk Miller, Storrs Bishop, John Fuller, Gay Ann Masolo, Diane Fladmo, Cal Gilbert, Patty Myers, and Erik Engellant. Ex-Officio members Governor Brian Schweitzer and Dr. Sheila Stearns, Commissioner of Higher Education were also present. State Superintendent Linda McCulloch was excused due to budget presentations at the legislature.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Kirk Miller, seconded by Regent Hamilton, the minutes of the September 9, 2004 meeting were unanimously approved as presented.

GUEST SPEAKER

Commissioner Stearns introduced guest speaker Jay Pfeiffer, Director of the Office of K-20 Education Information and Accountability of the Florida Department of Education. Mr. Pfeiffer discussed the student centered data warehouse which houses annual snapshots of student data which Florida maintains. The data warehouse contains information relating to financial aid, grades, employment information following graduation, etc. The data base keeps personally identifiable information separate and not accessible to the public.

Mr. Pfeiffer was instrumental in starting the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) which links data from multiple administrative data resources for accountability purposes. The Florida program tracks students to determine what happens to them after they leave educational institutions and determine results for people who receive education in prison. This program provides information for education accountability and occupational forecasting.

Mr. Pfeiffer stated that the fastest growing jobs require vocational/associate degrees and that the supply is not keeping up with demand. Mr. Pfeiffer also discussed the Interactive Education Performance Management System which is a system for use by teachers in the classroom and keeps information for each student for each year.

He stated the need to convey data to junior and senior high schools on projected incomes for various careers and the need to support two year postsecondary educational programs.

Governor Schweitzer thanked the group and left due to other commitments and turned the meeting over to Dr. Kirk Miller, Chair of the Board of Public Education.

SCHOOL FUNDING LAWSUIT REPORT

Jack Copps, Executive Director of the Montana Quality Education Coalition gave a report on the current status of the school funding lawsuit. He stated that the Montana Supreme Court had issued a preliminary order in November and expected to have its complete opinion issued before the end of the legislative session. The preliminary order stated that the current funding system is unconstitutional. The current funding system is not based on educationally relevant factors, including highly qualified teachers, the kind of science classrooms we need, the infrastructure we need for a system of quality schools. The legislature needs to assess educational needs, define the word "quality" and to construct a funding system that satisfies the required link back to the constitution. Quotes from the Constitutional Convention state that quality is dependent on contemporary needs and that quality is dynamic not static and should be subject to periodic reviews.

The coalition has not said that K-12 education needs \$350 million of new money each year. Until the legislature provides the link between the constitutional requirement and educationally relevant factors the \$\$ figure cannot be determined.

Regent Foster asked where the \$250 - \$350 million figure came from. Mr. Copps stated that he believed it was in a study presented to the Supreme Court. That someone else, possibly MTSBA put the figure on it based on the study.

Regent Roehm asked if the legislature was talking to the Board of Education (BOE) to determine "quality". Mr. Copps stated that there had been some dialogue and that the 1989 Supreme Court decision determined that the accreditation standards were the minimum upon which a quality education can be built.

Regent Mercer stated that he felt the BOE should try to get more involved as a board in this issue. He was concerned that the legislature may redefine quality to fit a certain price tag. Mr. Copps stated that he felt comments from the BOE would be appropriate. He believes it is the responsibility of the legislature to provide funding but the responsibility of the state as a whole to make the determination of what is educationally relevant and what determines quality.

Dr. Miller commented that three years ago the Board of Public Education (BPE) wrote a position paper on the adequacy of education funding. This resulted in the formation of the School Renewal Commission. The BPE has been involved from the beginning, and the BOE should be as well. The

BPE provides information under its responsibility of general supervision of schools and he feels comments from the BOE would bring more weight.

Regent Hamilton stated that they had been asked to join the lawsuit, but chose not to. Dr. Miller provides updates to the BOE from the School Renewal Commission. The Board needs to consider that Shared Leadership and the P-20 Committee have an important role in the standards of quality and supporting that effort.

BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION REPORT

Dr. Miller referred the Board to the written BPE report that he distributed. He highlighted the fact that they have two new board members, Gay Ann Masolo and Diane Fladmo. Diane was recently reappointed. He stated that Diane would be taking office as president of the National Association of State Boards of Education in January, 2006. The National School Boards Association president will also be from Montana, Joann Schmidt from Fairfield.

A major part of the BPE report involves the School Renewal Commission. After 17 meetings over a year and a half period the Commission put together 13 recommendations which it submitted to the legislature. These recommendations will result in legislation in the following areas:

- The Montana Accreditation standards are the foundation of a quality education
- SB 170 will create greater flexibility in the school calendar
- A bill to remove statutory and financial barriers to consolidation
- HB 124 will create statewide school district employee insurance pooling
- Appropriations to restore the gifted and talented specialist position at OPI and create a budget for an advisory council
- Appropriations to phase in increases in state support for special ed programs, allow schools to meet accreditation standards, attract and retain quality educators, address unique needs of all children
- A bill to address implementation of a statewide equalization plan
- A bill to provide funding for full-time kindergarten
- Increased appropriations for cultural education
- A bill to address quality infrastructure

Dr. Miller stated that the BPE was continuing its efforts on a communications plan. They currently have the funding to begin an ad campaign with the message that the education of kids is the best we can do for the economy of Montana.

Dr. Miller thanked Steve Meloy, Commissioner Stearns and Superintendent McCulloch for their work with the Shared Leadership Group. They are looking forward to adding a policy advisor from the Governor's office and continuing the work of the group.

They are continuing to look at the impacts of NCLB. He stated that the AYP reports had come out and that it should be stated that a school has met 19 of 20 requirements – not that they are a failing school. They are waiting to hear if the Federal government will accept Montana's definition of highly qualified teachers.

BOARD OF REGENTS' REPORT

Regent Mercer stated that the Board of Regents is looking at security and safety issues and has been trying to define quality. He stated that they are hoping the BOE can take a more active interest in establishing an advisory group on trust lands. The Regents feel that the Shared Leadership group is making a difference which is evident in the budgets proposed by former Governor Martz and Governor Schweitzer. They are looking for funding for a staff person for the BOE, dollars for improvements for buildings, workforce development and student scholarships.

The Regents are going to have a round table discussion with the Governor, Lieutenant Governor and legislative leaders. They want to tell them that the Regents are interested in problems facing the state that may not relate to education. They want to build a relationship and be supportive.

Regent Mercer acknowledged that Regent Roehm's term was coming to an end. He stated that he was an outstanding member of the Regents and the BOE. Regent Mercer thanked him for the tremendous sacrifice and efforts he made to the Regents.

The Board of Regents is optimistic about the future and building on the working relationship they have established with the BPE. They are hoping that with a full time staffer the BOE may be able to do a lot more on big issues. Regent Mercer invited the BOE members to make it clear to Higher Ed if there is anything they could do that they're not doing.

Regent Hamilton commented on the credit transfer project and stated that they had a conference call meeting to establish the parameters and that there would be further discussion later in the meeting.

SHARED LEADERSHIP PROJECT

Commissioner Stearns reported on the Shared Leadership Project. They will be presenting a report to the joint education sub-committee of the Legislature on Monday. The project has gained momentum and work on the committees and shared leadership has increased the commitment and activity level in the Commissioner's office. Dave Gibson has been hired as Associate Commissioner for Economic Development and Outreach and will be keeping efforts moving along. The goal is for a stronger Montana economy, a stronger Montana and when they get specified actions rolling they will move on to other projects whether they deal with education or not.

Commissioner Stearns shared copies of a slide show they have prepared for presentation to the joint education sub-committee. A copy is attached. The three priority initiatives are:

- develop stronger business-university system partnerships for workforce training;
- remove barriers to access for postsecondary education (some type not just 4 year); and
- expand distance learning programs and training

She stated that there are good distance learning programs at the campus level. Some campuses do a really good job getting regional, state and national programs. What is lacking is coordination in getting the campuses to work together so that students can move seamlessly around the system.

The steering committee recommendations are:

- improve the connection between businesses and the state's workforce training providers;
- increase the awareness of opportunities and the value of two-year educations;
- use the "New Jersey" model as a benchmark to improve the coordination and delivery of apprenticeship training;
- improve coordination of two-year postsecondary education in Montana;
- evaluate the current structure and/or combination of community colleges and colleges of technology in Montana;
- increase the utilization of dual enrollment programs in Montana; and
- improve data collection to better target resources for workforce training.

Someone is needed at the state level to help coordinate across the system. There needs to be one place a person can go to access information all across the system, not campus by campus. A needs assessment needs to be conducted to determine the types of distance learning programs needed and develop those as priority programs. Montana needs to create a seamless transition from K-12 to higher education.

Currently over one-third of jobs require some postsecondary education. It is predicted that there will be a shortage of about 2 million workers in 20 years. Montana needs a needs-based aid program. A lot of people are being left out that cannot afford to attend postsecondary education. Montana lacks a connection with the business industry to ensure that Montana will have a prepared workforce. Local institutions do well reaching out to their local community, but someone needs to be looking at the big picture for the state as a whole.

The role of two-year education systems is complicated and not well understood. The current organization of the state's two-year systems impedes planning and collaboration. Dual enrollment is inconsistent and not well coordinated statewide.

They will be spending time with the legislature and the Board of Regents on these issues. Commissioner Stearns encouraged all BOE members to get involved with the legislative process to promote these issues. The P-20 Committee will be the key vehicle for carrying out these goals, i.e. seamless transition, ticket to the middle class that a lot of people are missing, etc.

Regent Hamilton complimented the people working on this project. She acknowledged that it was a very difficult project, but the level of conversation going on across the state is terrific. People have heard of Shared Leadership and know what the issues are. Regent Roehm questioned where we go from here and who is going to follow up on the restructuring of the two year system so that it's more manageable?

Following a general discussion Commissioner Stearns stated that Dave Gibson would be the point of contact on this issue and that many of the decisions may have to wait until the legislative session is over to see what transpires with the legislature. Regent Mercer said that we will have to keep working

on the shared leadership concept and to continue sharing information to keep people on the same page. Each Board will have to take active leadership before the legislature on issues that concern their board, such as two year programs – this is an area where Regents will have to take active leadership.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

P-20 Committee

Regent Hamilton reported that they have been making progress on targeted goals. It is apparent that key issues need further discussion between agencies. They brought in a facilitator who has experience in business development. Both the OPI and OCHE staffs went through a different strategic planning process that has promise to work across agency lines. They came up with a rough draft of a document to identify vision and shared values. The strategies need refinement and the leadership group will need to continue the discussion. They hope to have a planning paper back and forwarded to both boards in February.

The dual enrollment task force met on December 14th. They are defining terms and working on a draft document. Arlene Parisot has met twice with the committee to further redefine the document and include specific recommendations. Senator Mike Cooney and Arlene have been in contact at the request of a parent and are working with Rep. Facey on the Running Start Program. Senator Cooney put in a bill draft request for standardizing dual enrollment for the state. The hope is to have legislation in place that could be amended that would satisfy all of our needs. Some of the issues that need to be dealt with are defining eligibility criteria, costs and funding for students, FTE and ANB issues, and curriculum.

Commissioner Stearns stated that it is critical that the boards work together on this issue. Dual enrollment is frustrating as a transfer issue. If the boards don't work together then Montanans will be frustrated and it will not be in the best interest of the students. Dual enrollment issues will take the Board of Education and staff devoting time and making this a priority.

Regent Hamilton stated that a policy audit would help identify policies that relate to P-20 issues and goals and strengthening teacher quality data and accountability systems. An audit will suggest legislative initiatives that will strengthen the P-20 environment.

The Assessment and Alignment group will meet January 20th and maybe at the end of the month to develop tasks and timelines. Facilitators are Jan Clinard from OCHE and Margaret Bowles and Judy Snow from OPI.

Steve Meloy updated the board on the distance learning pilot project. Paul Rowland has reported to Steve on a regular basis to keep the P-20 group advised. Steve received a report on Friday with a summary of where they are at with the 199 students enrolled. Thirteen courses are being offered in 19 school districts. The facilitators at the school and in the classrooms are excellent. There has been some concern that UofM would stay in the business, which is raising the hackles of MEA-MFT and MTSBA. MTSBA is putting together a consortia of school districts to put together an off-site learning system using on-line technology. Diane Fladmo stated that the P-20 Committee hopes there will be a way to sustain the pilot project.

The counselor leadership initiative shows how vital the role of school counselors are in informing the students of options. The resources of counselors are so stretched - this is only one of the roles they serve. Rene Dubay said two years ago that two deputies have been trying to help move the school counseling association to up the standards for their profession. Montana is one of the few states tackling this issue at the state level. School administrators and OPI, etc are talking about counseling in one place and making an action plan. We don't have many school counselors so we have to make sure that they are well utilized and well supported.

Regent Hamilton indicated that there are bills in the legislature that could have an important impact on P-20 depending on how they come out. Both OPI and OCHE have bill tracking mechanisms in place to follow the progress. Diane Fladmo stated that there was a bill asking for funding to allow all students to take the ACT tests.

BUDGET COMMITTEE

Regent Semmens stated that the budget committee had not met since the September meeting. They still need to define "unified budget" and need a staff member to assist. The BOE is going to need to be better informed with respect to P-20 before budgets are finalized to meet the test of a unified budget. The University System is embarking on a new budget process, which entails determining at the beginning of any legislative session what expenditures are needed to deliver a quality education at the higher education level. This will be discussed in more detail at the Regents meeting in the afternoon. They are asking for funding from the state for an additional \$8 million for present law adjustments. Three million dollars will be mostly at the community college level. Some requests are one-time only money for deferred maintenance.

Commissioner Stearns related that they had a very good meeting with the Governor's staff. More students are standing in line because programs are full. The Governor has reallocated some funds going to shared leadership areas.

Storrs Bishop stated that the BOE needs to gear up for the unified budget process for the next biennium.

Steve Meloy stated that OPI was presenting its K-12 budget before the Appropriations Committee today and was asking for funding for full day kindergarten and Indian Education for All. The BPE did well before the committee and managed to get its budget increased by \$20,000 for the biennium to allow the BPE to participate with the BOE without having to squeeze into BPE or Regents' meetings. They asked for a grade 16 to assist the BPE and BOE.

INDIAN EDUCATION FOR ALL COMMITTEE

Regent Roehm stated that the Indian Education for All legislation passed two sessions ago but was not funded. The Governor has \$2 million in the budget this time to fund this program. Mike Jetty from OPI testified this morning regarding the need for this funding. The committee had a meeting at Cal Gilbert's school. The Longfellow School program emphasized self worth and self respect and

permeated through all students at the school. Cal and Reno Charette are doing a good job. Dr. Ridell has brought in a high school history teacher using federal funds to standardize how we approach history as related to Indian history. This should be Indian Education for All Montanans. Educators should be required to provide knowledge of other cultures to all of our students. The Indian Ed summit put on by OPI was very productive in defining the issues. The challenge is to bring forth a meaningful resolution of these problems.

Cal Gilbert stated that they have had meetings in Great Falls regarding the confusion about Indian Education for All and that's why they are going with "for all Montanans." We need to be focusing on non-native students, the people they are growing up with, working with and living with. The headline in Great Falls has to do with AYP and schools not making it based on Native American students. This goes beyond Native American students and affects the entire community. When talking about closing the gap we have to talk about Indian Education for All. Support has to come from Native American communities but has to work with P-20. Research has to take place about Montana Indians going into curriculum development. Educators want to do the right thing but they don't have the right tools.

POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Regent Roehm reported that there is work in progress on policy guidelines. The trust lands issue has been discussed. The board did approve an addition to a sentence in the description to describe what the committee does. The BOE has two purposes: one to unify the budget and second to plan for the future. The legislature looks just to the funding cycle, but the BOE is the group that can look further down the road.

Dr. Miller asked if there was any other business.

Patty Myers stated that the time may have come for the Board of Education to look at longer than a half a day meeting.

Dr. Miller opened the meeting for public comment. There was none.

Regent Mercer stated that at 5:00 p.m. on January 20th a reception was being held for Regent Roehm who was retiring and they would be happy to have everyone come.

There being no further business, Regent Roehm moved and Diane Fladmo seconded a motion to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted by:

/s/ Linda McCulloch
Linda McCulloch, State Superintendent